

Nash Building
North half: 901-911 Douglas St.
South half: 902-912 Farnam St.
Omaha
Douglas County
Nebraska

HABS No. NE-36

HABS
NEB
28 - 50000

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HABS
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

NASH BUILDING (North Half)

HABS No. NB-36

- Location: North half: 901-911 Douglas St. and south half: 902-912 Farnam St., Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.
- Present Owner: City of Omaha.
- Present Use: The north half of the building was demolished in 1980. The building was originally composed of two twin structures which were connected by a passageway; the south half (902-912 Farnam Street) has been left intact.
- Significance: The 1905-1907 Nash Buildings are an important example of early modern commercial architecture, featuring functional design and structural and fire protection innovations. The buildings, designed by well-known Nebraska architect Thomas Roger Kimball, are also important for their historical association with M. E. Smith and Company, the region's largest dry goods firm and one of the city's important industries.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1905-1907.
2. Architect: Thomas R. Kimball (1862-1934). Kimball was one of the State of Nebraska's most distinguished architects. He received his formal training at the University of Nebraska, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cowles Art School and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He was appointed Architect-in-chief, along with C. Howard Walker, for the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in Omaha. From 1919 to 1932 he served as a professional advisor to the Nebraska State Capital Commission. In 1909 he was elected a Fellow in The American Institute of Architects and was its National President from 1918-1920.

Kimball's most notable buildings include the Omaha Public Library (1891-1894), St. Cecelias Cathedral (1905-1909) and the Burlington Station (1896), all in Omaha, and the Hall County Courthouse (1901-1904) in Grand Island, all of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a list of past property owners for the north half of Nash building. Source of these records is Douglas County Recorder of Deeds.

Book 9, Deed Book

Lot 1, Block 124 - Original City of Omaha

North half of Nash Building

Grantor	Grantee	Date of Instrument	Character of Instrument
Ella M. Monell	Catherine B. Nash	Dec. 6, 1905	WD
Catherine B. Nash	The C. B. Nash Co.	Jan. 23, 1907	WD
C. B. Nash Co.	Burgess Nash Bldg. Co.	Dec. 26, 1928	WD
E. W. Nash Bldg. Co.	Major Realty Co.	May 31, 1946	WD
Major Realty Co.	Rose Cohen	Sept. 29, 1951	CWD
Rose Cohen	Ninth Street Realty Co.	Oct. 3, 1951	WD
Ninth St. Realty Co.	Mathur Inc.	Feb. 10, 1954	CWD
Mathur Inc.	Omat Company	Nov. 15, 1956	CWD
Omat Company	Brandeis Invest. Co.	Sept. 3, 1964	WD
Brandeis Invest. Co.	Pendleton Woolen Mills	Oct. 20, 1964	CWD

Lot 2, Block 124-Original City of Omaha

North half of Nash Building

Grantor	Grantee	Date of Instrument	Character of Instrument
Earl W. Gannett	Catherine B. Nash	Nov. 28, 1905	WD
Jos. W. Lee & Wf.	Peter Jessen Jr.	Dec. 4, 1905	WD
Peter Jessen Jr.	Catherine B. Nash	Dec. 6, 1905	WD
Jos. F. Nolan et al	Catherine B. Nash	Nov. 14, 1905	WD
Catherine B. Nash	The C. B. Nash Co.	Jan. 23, 1907	WD
C. B. Nash Co.	Burgess-Nash Bldg.	Dec. 26, 1928	WD
E. W. Nash Bldg. Co.	Major Realty Co.	May 31, 1946	WD
Major Realty Co.	Rose Cohen	Sept. 29, 1951	CWD
Rose Cohen	Ninth St. Realty Co.	Oct. 3, 1951	WD
Ninth St. Realty Co.	Mathur Inc.	Feb. 10, 1954	CWD
Mathur Inc.	Omat Company	Nov. 15, 1956	CWD
Omat Company	Brandeis Invest. Co.	Sept. 3, 1964	WD
Brandeis Invest. Co.	Pendleton Woolen Mills	Oct. 20, 1964	CWD
City of Omaha	Pendleton Woolen Mills	July 11, 1977	Ret. of Appraise

4. Builder: Capitol City Brick and Pipe Company.

5. Original plans and construction: The twin buildings (north and south sections) cost \$190,000 each and were designed for factory and wholesale warehouse use.

Original architectural drawings of the buildings are available for purposes of further study at the Permits and Inspection Division of the City of Omaha. See Supplemental Material, Sources of Information, for xerox copies of some of the drawings.

6. Alterations and additions: In 1927 the building was remodeled and added with a new loading dock. George B. Prinz was the architect.

- B. Historical Context: The twin buildings were built by Mrs. Catherine B. Nash for M. E. Smith and Company, the largest and most important wholesale dry goods firm in Omaha at the turn of the century.

The firm was formed in 1870 in Council Bluffs and moved to Omaha in the 1880s, headquartered in the Ames Block. The company, having been highly successful in its wholesale goods business, later expanded into manufacture of clothing.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Nash Building was not designed as an ordinary commercial building. Rather, it was designed to be more functional, safer and to carry structural tensions more effectively. Architect Kimball was more concerned with technical factors in his work than with appearance of a building.
2. Condition of fabric: The building was in good condition at the time of its demolition.

- B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The eight-story square building measures 132'x 132'. The north and south elevations are nine bays each, and the east elevation is eight bays.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Walls: Brick, dark reddish brown in color, with a curtain wall.
4. Structural system, framing: Heavy timber frame.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entry at Farnam Street is defined by a massive brick vaulted hood supported by stone consoles.
 - b. Windows: Window openings range from stilted segmental arches on the first level, through rectangular openings with cast-iron lintels on the intermediate levels, to semi-circular arches at the top floor. Smaller, slit type windows occur at the corner bay.

6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat, built-up roof.
 - b. Cornice: A corbeled, arcuated brick wall cornice occurs between the seventh and eighth floors.
- C. Description of Interior:
 1. Floor plans: All floors contain open bays of approximately 14-1/2' x 16'.
 2. Stairways: Steel fire stairs are at the northwest corner and the south wall.
 3. Flooring: Basement floors are concrete. All other floors are wood.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are brick; ceilings are wood.
 5. Doors: Steel fire doors.
 6. Mechanical equipment: The building is equipped with innovative fire safety equipment used in the turn of the century. Brick stairways, elevators, standard fire doors, stand pipes, automatic sprinkler systems and outlet scuppers are among the equipment still in use today.
- D. Site: The buildings are located in Omaha's major light industrial and warehouse district which runs between 8th and 10th from Douglas and Jackson Streets.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

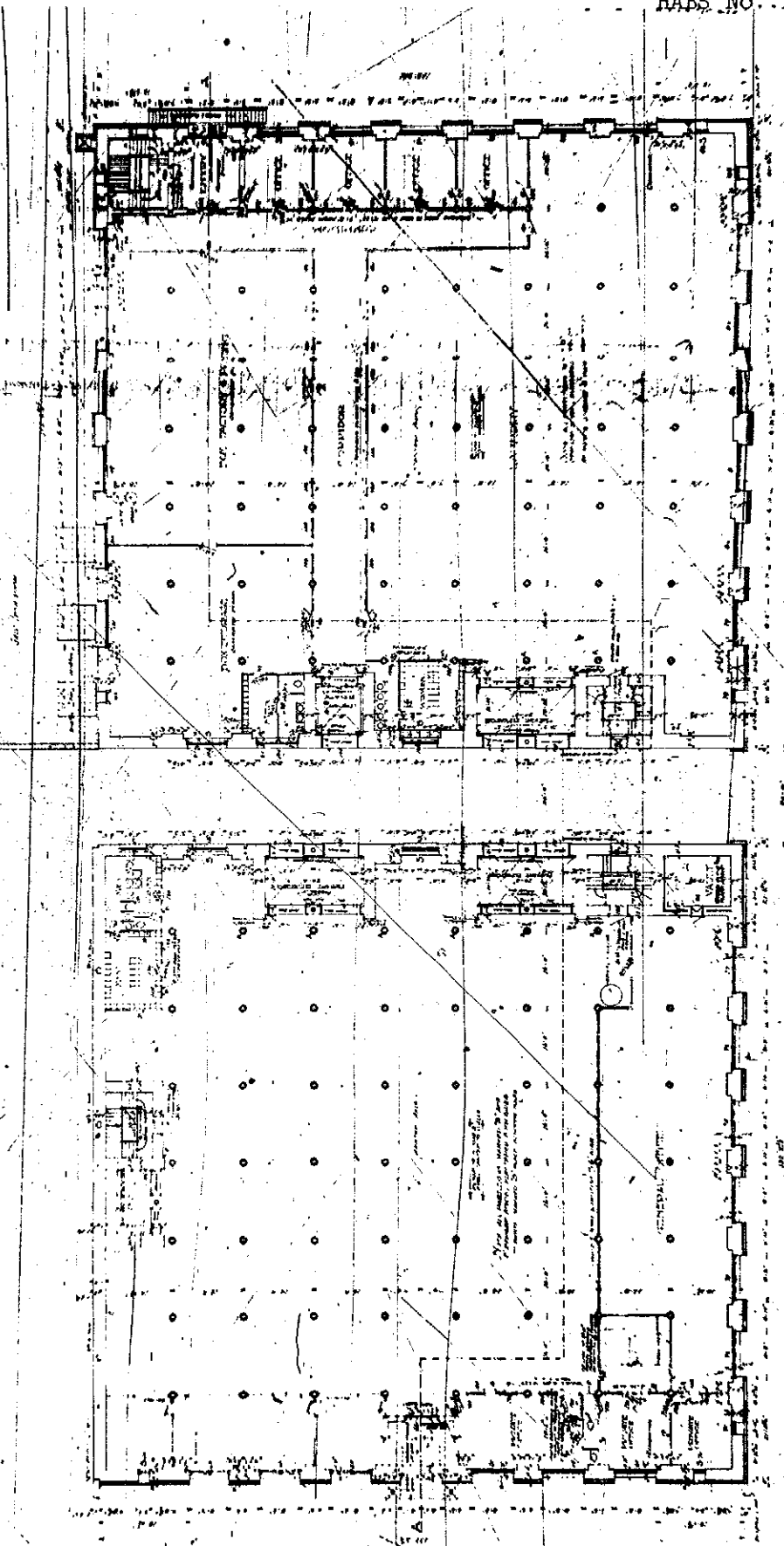
Drawings of the Nash Buildings on microfilm are at the Permits and Inspection Division, Housing and Community Development Department, City of Omaha, Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, 4th floor Omaha, Nebraska. 68183. Roll Number 2, Permit Number 369. May 31, 1906. See also Supplemental Material.

B. Bibliography:

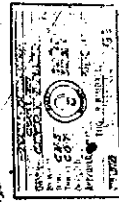
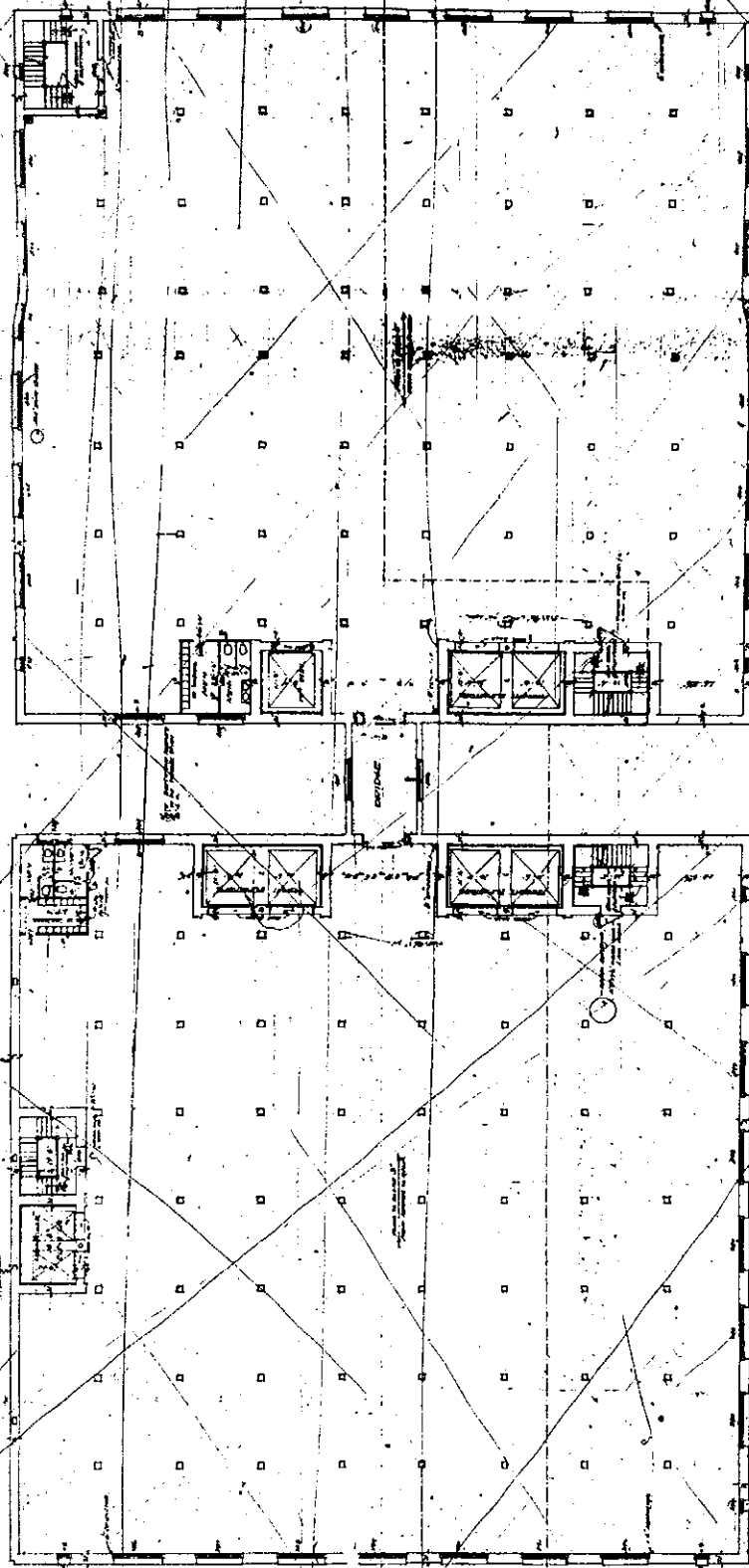
Property transfer records, Douglas County Recorder of Deeds.

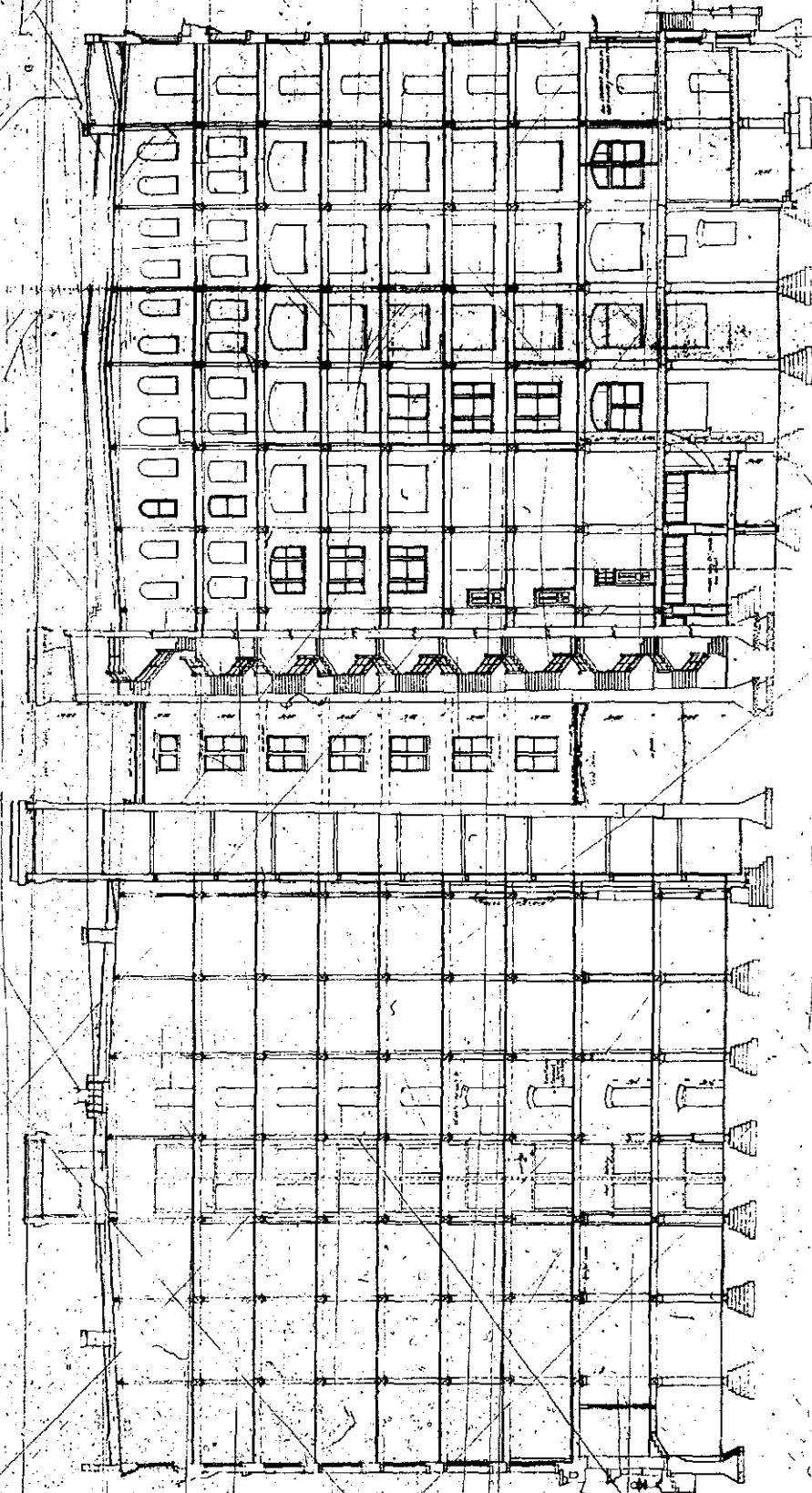
State Historic Preservation Office Report by the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1500 R Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68508. March 24, 1978.

C. Supplemental Material: See attached.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN COURTESY OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOP. DEPT.
CITY OF OMAHA, NEBRASKA



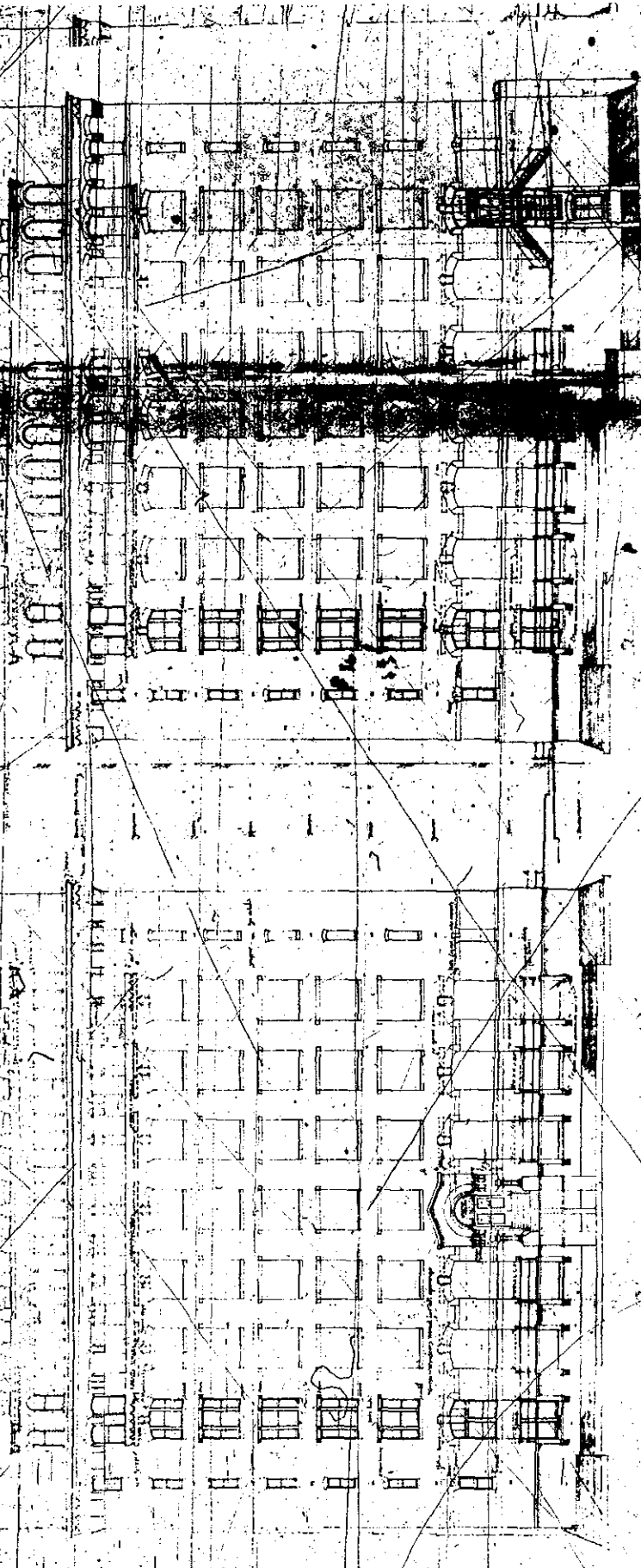


SECTION A-A LOOKING WEST

CALIFORNIA

REAR BUILDING

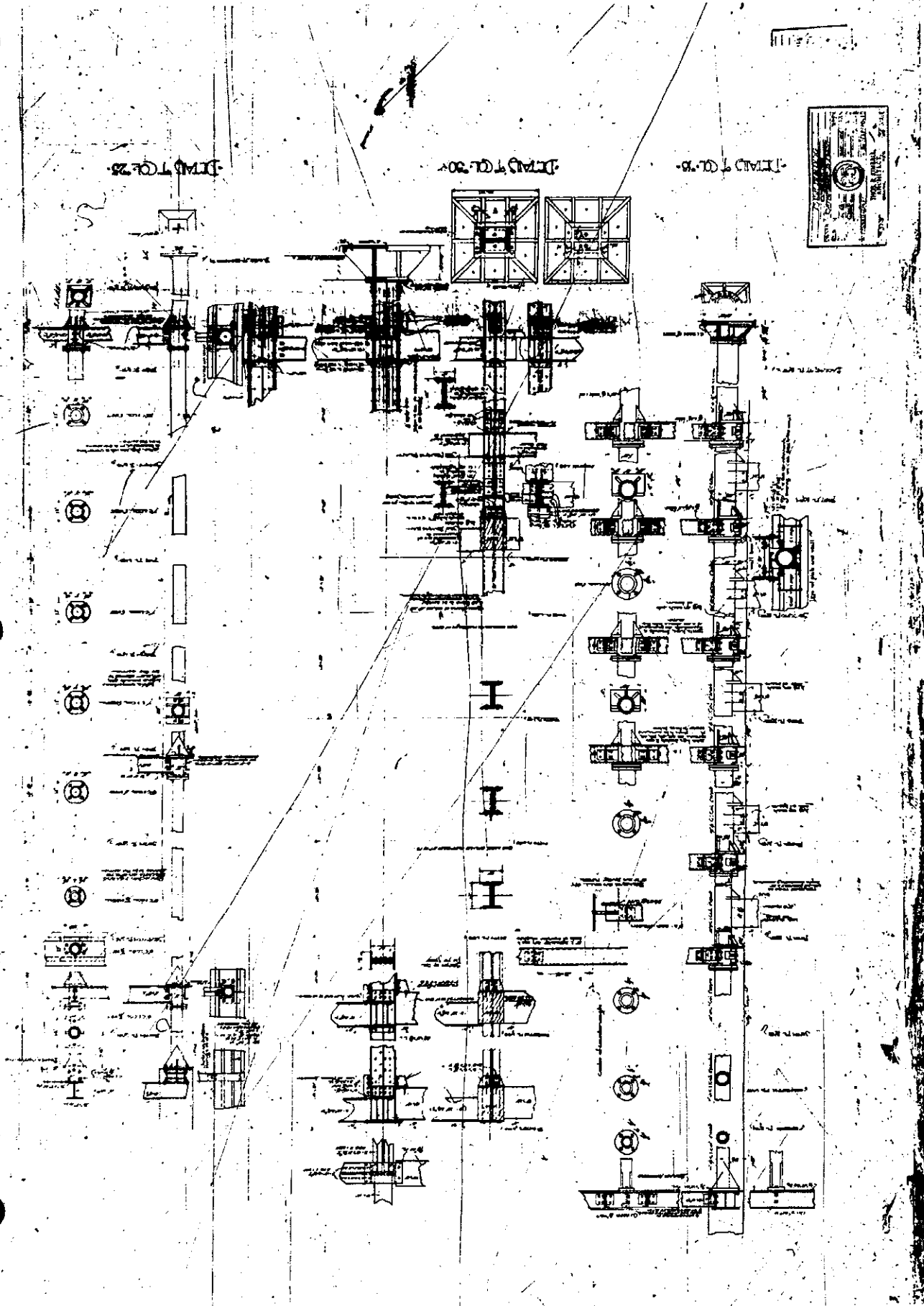
SECTION A-A, LOOKING WEST. COURTESY OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPT., CITY OF OMAHA, NEBRASKA



SALES BUILDING
ELEVATION SECTION 31

ELECTRIC BUILDING
ELEVATION SECTION 32





PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

The records were the result of an agreement between the City of Omaha and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in compliance with Executive Order 11593 as a mitigative effort in the redevelopment plan. The written documentation was prepared by the City of Omaha Planning Department. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the documentation in the winter of 1981-1982, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. The documentary photos were taken by Lynn Meyer of Omaha City Planning Department in February and March 1980.